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## **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO FEATURE LATEST SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO HIV TREATMENT AND PREVENTION**

### **Conference Programme to Explore Scientific Advances in the Context of Developing Countries**

**Rio de Janeiro, 4 April 2005** – As the largest international gathering of its kind, the 3<sup>rd</sup> IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis and Treatment will convene in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 24-27 July 2005, Conference organizers announced today. Held every two years, the Conference is a unique opportunity for leading scientists, public health experts and community leaders to examine the latest scientific developments related to HIV, and to explore how advances in basic, clinical and prevention science can inform the global response to the epidemic. The Conference is organised by the International AIDS Society (IAS) in partnership with the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and the Sociedade Brasileira de Infectologia (SBI).

“The Conference will provide a dynamic forum for scientists, public health experts and community leaders to explore how state-of-the-art science can be applied to the realities of developing countries,” said Dr. Helene Gayle, President of IAS and Director for HIV, TB and Reproductive Health for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “Scientific knowledge is critical, but we also need political will to translate research into programs to prevent and treat HIV in developing countries,” added Dr. Gayle.

“In the past five years there have been dramatic changes in the global response to HIV, with efforts to expand access to life-sustaining treatments in developing countries emerging as a global imperative,” said Conference Co-Chair Dr. Mauro Schechter, Professor of Infectious Disease and Head of the AIDS Programme at UFRJ. “In 2005, it is no longer a question of if we can ensure access to treatment, but how best to do so. Though the global pace of such efforts is not as fast as we would like, examples such as Brazil demonstrate that success is within our reach.”

The choice of Brazil as host reflects the leadership role it has played in ensuring access to HIV treatment, and at the same time, promoting aggressive HIV prevention. Adopted in 1988, the Brazilian constitution specifies that health is a citizen’s right and a state duty. As a result, Brazilians living with HIV/AIDS are guaranteed access to free HIV medications through the country’s national health system. A distinguishing feature of Brazil’s program is the use of publicly- and privately-produced, generic versions of many of the most common HIV drugs. In HIV prevention – including social marketing and vaccine research – Brazil also is viewed as a leader, with nongovernmental organizations, in partnership with government, playing a central role in Brazil’s national response.

“It is my hope that Brazil’s success in providing universal access to HIV treatment and aggressive prevention programs can serve as a model for developing countries struggling to balance the reality of high rates of HIV infection with very limited resources,” said Conference Co-Chair Dr. Celso Ramos, Former President of SBI. “We are extremely proud to be a co-organiser of the Conference and to have this opportunity to share our success with colleagues from around the world and to learn from their experiences.”

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The programme will feature a dynamic mix of scientific sessions, including plenary speeches by leading researchers focusing on the global response to the epidemic, prevention science, and state-of-the-art treatment. The programme also will include abstract-driven sessions, debates, forums and industry sponsored satellite symposia. A record number of abstracts (2,060) were submitted for presentation – an increase of nearly 10% over the previous conference in 2003. The submissions from 114 countries cover a wide range of topics across basic, clinical and prevention science. One-fifth of the abstracts focus on treatment and care in resource-constrained settings, reflecting the organisers' commitment to ensuring that research is examined in the context of developing countries.

To expand participation by individuals from developing countries, organisers are offering a reduced fee for delegates from Latin America and Non-OECD countries, and will award at least 200 scholarships. In an effort to further expand access, webcasts of plenaries and other key sessions, as well as online coverage of scientific sessions, will be provided through IAS' online partners, the Kaiser Family Foundation and Medscape.

"IAS is proud to bring together researchers, as well as health and other professionals from around the world, providing a truly international conference where the latest scientific advances and their implications can be debated and discussed," said IAS Executive Director Craig McClure.

An international panel of world-renown scientists and public health experts has served on the Conference Organizing Committee for the past year. A Community Advisory Board, with representatives from Brazil and other countries, has also provided input to the programme.

#### About the Co-Organisers:

The **International AIDS Society** is the world's professional society for scientists, health care and public health workers, and others engaged in HIV/AIDS prevention, control and care. The IAS has more than 6,000 individual members from over 130 countries, and 16 affiliated national and regional societies representing yet another 6,000 members.

The **Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro** is the largest federal university in Brazil. Created in 1987, its AIDS programme is presently the largest provider of tertiary care for HIV infected individuals in the region. In addition to a very active research programme, the AIDS programme at UFRJ is involved in a variety of educational programmes, providing teaching and training for a large number of students and health care professionals from Brazil and other countries.

Founded in 1980, the **Sociedade Brasileira de Infectologia** counts over 1,000 members today. SBI is affiliated with the Brazilian Medical Association, the major representative organisation of Brazilian physicians, and the Society acts as its Department of Infectious Diseases. SBI is one of the principal training organizations for HIV clinicians in the public health sector in Brazil and publishes the Brazilian Journal of Infectious Diseases.

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#### Media Enquiries:

<p><b>Adina Fulgaradi</b> (Geneva) IAS Communications Coordinator Tel: +41 22 710 08 28 E-mail: <a href="mailto:adina.fulgaradi@iasociety.org">adina.fulgaradi@iasociety.org</a></p>	<p><b>Edmilson Oliveira da Silva</b> (Rio de Janeiro) Tel: +55 21 2562-6027 E-mail: <a href="mailto:edmilsonsilva@hucff.ufrj.br">edmilsonsilva@hucff.ufrj.br</a></p>
<p><b>Leandro Cahn</b> (Buenos Aires) Tel: +54 11 4981-7777 ext. 26 E-mail: <a href="mailto:leandro@huesped.org.ar">leandro@huesped.org.ar</a></p>	<p><b>Regina Aragón</b> (California, USA) Tel: +1 510 393-9435 Email: <a href="mailto:reginaaragon@yahoo.com">reginaaragon@yahoo.com</a></p>

For more information, including online delegate registration, media accreditation and additions to the Conference programme, please visit [www.ias-2005.org](http://www.ias-2005.org).



In scientific partnership with the  
Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and the  
Brazilian Society of Infectious Diseases

